



COVID-19 Special Report Unanswered Questions: Improving Technology, Communications, and Reporting in Long-Term Care Facilities During the Pandemic

What Was Performed? A special report was performed that reviewed information provided to and from Delaware's long-term care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Why This Engagement? Under the Delaware Code, it is the State Auditor's job to offer suggestions to improve efficiency and effectiveness in state government. This special report evaluates how well the State of Delaware prepared long-term care facilities (LTCFs) for the pandemic and how it responded to facilities' needs at the beginning of the pandemic and then six months later. This special report is intended to help state health officials improve in areas identified from our review of publicly reported COVID-19 data and information gathered from surveyed and interviewed long-term care facility administrators.

What Was Found? Delaware's long-term care facilities, which have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, needed clearer guidance and assistance from the state during the early stages of the pandemic. The report highlights three observations:

1. **Pandemic information:** COVID-19 guidance changed frequently, came from multiple sources, was hard to interpret or was completely absent.
2. **Crisis communications:** When faced with difficult situations, LTCFs were unable to contact or receive timely assistance from State health agencies.
3. **Pandemic reporting:** Data reported to the federal government did not match data reported through state Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) news releases; 18 LTCFs were not reporting data to the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

The special report offers six recommendations for improvement. The new special report, "Unanswered Questions: Improving Technology, Communications, and Reporting in Long-Term Care Facilities," can be found on our website: [click here](#).

Under [Delaware Code 2909](#), the Auditor of Accounts may produce special reports that examine state agencies' performance and offer recommendations for greater accuracy and efficiency, as well as data, information and recommendations the auditor deems advisable and necessary.

Please do not reply to this email. For any questions regarding the attached report, please contact State Auditor Kathleen McGuinness at Kathleen.Mcguinness@delaware.gov.
